STORMWATCH: TEAM ACHILLES #5

"ENEMY MANIPULATION"

by

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Stormwatch: Team Achilles
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PAGE 1

PANEL ONE

Widescreen, 3/4 page tall. A GIANT SUPERTERRORIST in Eastern Block camouflage looms in the midground, his head as big as the entire panel. The giant's enormous hand is gripped around BLAKE COLEMAN's waist, trying to shove Blake in his mouth and bite his head off.

Blake fires his Advanced Infantry Weapon into the gigantic freak's face, chipping his teeth, tearing chunks out of his lips.

CAPTION
Tuesday the 9th. Grozny, Chechnya

COLEMAN
You want some, Bitch? GET SOME!

GIANT SUPERTERRORIST
Ghhaaaaaaaah!

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Two-shot on Golovin and PINCKNEY, lying down in sniper positions, hundreds of meters away.

Golovin and Pinckney are wearing StormWatch Ghille Suits (yay, you get to design THAT!). They stare towards camera in amazement (Golovin through a huge telescopic sight, Pinckney through spotter's glasses). A tiny image of the Giant is visible (upside down) on the front of the scope.

We are in a bombed-out urban environment, similar to the one in the 8-page preview story (see some good reference websites on the last page). Pinckney and Golovin are in the top story of a 3-story tall bombed out building. The fight between Coleman and the giant takes place in what used to be a city square. On one edge of the square is a huge burnt Mosque.

PINCKNEY
What's Coleman doing? Checking him for cavities?

GOLOVIN
He is about to become one. Should I take the shot?

PINCKNEY

And give away our position? Not bloody likely! Give him a second. Maybe he’ll work it out.

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PANEL ONE

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Coleman's weapon hangs from its sling, ammo expended... He reaches over his shoulder, digging in his rucksack for something. The Giant's mouth looms closer.

COLEMAN
Grrrrnnh!

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Coleman pulls something rectangular from his rucksack (it's a claymore mine).

PANEL THREE

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Close on the Claymore. On the curved front are the words "FRONT TOWARD ENEMY."

TECHNICAL CAPTION (see issues 1 & 2)
The M-18 AntiPersonnel Mine. Curved for directional aiming.

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Coleman throws the mine down the giant's throat like a frisbee.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
It consists of a thin plastic cover over a metal backing plate packed with a pound of Composition B explosive and 700 metal ball bearings the size of marbles.

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PANEL ONE

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Coleman has a 9” Ka-Bar combat knife shoved under the giant’s thumbnail. The giant is not pleased, his eyes wide open in pain. Imagine shoving a toothpick under your thumbnail... You get the idea.

GIANT SUPERTERRORIST
Nyyraaaaaaaaaaah!

COLEMAN
Let... Go!

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. The giant lets go.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Coleman falls towards the ground. In his hand is a Claymore clacker with a small antenna sticking out of it. He’s squeezing it.

SOUND E/FX
Clack Clack Clack

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. The giant’s neck explodes outward, just above the clavicle -- no flames, just tons and tons of metal BBs tearing his throat out. Oh, and lots and lots of blood.

TECHNICAL CAPTION
When triggered, 700 ball bearings fill the air, each travelling faster than a rifle bullet.

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PANEL ONE

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. On Coleman looking up towards camera. The shadow of the dying giant covers him.

COLEMAN
You gotta be fucking kidding me.

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Coleman jumps sideways as the dying giant falls face-first down towards him.

NO DIALOG

PANEL THREE

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. Coleman stands in front of the prostrate dead giant, dripping with gore.

COLEMAN
You mother--I’m gonna smell like Blood and Garlic for the next two weeks!

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen, 1/4 page tall. On Pinckney and Golovin watching Coleman.

PINCKNEY
One down, six to go. Told you he’d work it out.

GOLOVIN
Yes. Since you talk incessantly, you were bound to be correct about something.

PINCKNEY
Just keep an eye out for you-know-who. This should bring them running.

PAGE 5 **5**

Widescreen, 2/3 page tall. Santini stands in front of a wall-mounted projection screen, talking to the StormWatch team. On the screen is a map of Chechnya and the surrounding Caucuses area. IMPORTANT - the screen must be mounted to the wall and not hanging in front of it.

Everyone is in the relaxed BDU with Blue Beret ensemble from issue #4.

CAPTION
Thursday the 4th. Stormwatch HQ, New York City

SANTINI
Delta Team’s target is Dhul Fiqar the rogue Super Powered Being activator. Once he’s terminated, everyone else’s missions are over and you radio for extraction. Questions?

PINCKNEY
Yes. No military unit has been allowed into Chechnya since The Authority kicked the Russians out last year. We’re going into No-Man’s Land here...

PINCKNEY
But you’ve got maps of the terrorist facility and recent photos of all the targets. So where did we get this Intel?

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, 1/3 page tall. On Pinckney, Golovin sitting next to him.

PINCKNEY
Because if it’s from the Americans, it’s probably 50% lies. If it’s Chechan intel, it’s 80% lies, and if it’s Russian, it’s 100% lies. No insults intended to any Russians in our midst, Galena.

GOLOVIN
I am sorry... were you talking?

PAGE 6 **6**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. On Galena, talking to Santini. Pinckney looks at her, pissed about her last comment.

GOLOVIN
I have a question also, Colonel. Would you like me to kill the creature clinging to the wall above you?

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. On Santini. He looks upwards. There’s nothing on the wall above him. Or is there? Remember the effect in Predator? That’s what we’re talking about here.

SANTINI
No. That’s where we got our Intel.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. Above Santini, the indistinguishable, barely visible blob drops its camouflage. It’s a smallish creature about half the size of a human being. It’s not a lizard, per se... But it sure ain’t human. It should be pretty creepy with some type of fuzz or fur which can change color and help it blend in with the surrounding landscape... Like a built-in ghillie suit.

SANTINI
This is Buzz Dixon, former Stormwatch reservist and an expert at gathering hard-to-get information.

BUZZ
The broad’s got good eyes.

SANTINI
She’s my lead sniper. She’d better have good eyes. Makes me wonder why her spotter didn’t see you, though.

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. Pinckney talking to Galena behind the back of his hand.

PINCKNEY (SMALL)
Oh, charming. What’s less trustworthy than Russians? Getting Intel from a damned furry SPB.

GOLOVIN (SMALL)
Shut. Up.

PAGE 7 **7**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. Buzz is lower on the wall next to Santini's face. His big, floppy ears picked up what Pinckney said. He's not happy.

BUZZ
Hey! Funny Guy! I spent four days getting close to these nutjobs and was almost caught twice. Me. You're a lot bigger and noisier.

BUZZ
So you'd better keep your big yap shut and follow my goddamn maps step for step if you want to live to see your Queen's fat ass again, you Limey fuck.

PANEL TWO

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. Santini next to Buzz. Smirking.

SANTINI
Buzz was seconded to my unit during Operations Desert Storm and Jungle Thunder. I vouch for his work. If this freak's big, floppy ears heard it or his creepy buggy eyes saw it, it's good intel.

BUZZ
Gee, that's real fucking big of ya, Ben.

SANTINI
No problem, Buzz.

PANEL THREE

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. On Santini, pointing to the projection display where a photo of the giant is displayed. A smaller picture of a cat-like woman is also onscreen.(think: Tigra of the Avengers but with more of a cat-like head and six nipples.)

SANTINI
Study his maps. Learn the guards' daily routines.

BUZZ
They keep to those schedules like a swiss clock. Totally stupid, but hey, that's why we're the professionals and the amateurs wind up dead, right?

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

Widescreen, 1/4 tall. Over Santini’s shoulder, looking out onto the assembled StormWatch team. Deadly serious.

SANTINI
This plan is all about timing. Once the shit hits the fan, they’re all going to come running.

SANTINI
And you’d better kill every single one of them...

PAGE 8 **8**

PANEL ONE

Widescreen. Behind Coleman, the weird CAT/WOMAN from the briefing photos leaps at him, huge razor-sharp claws extended. Coleman twists at the waist, turning to face the incoming enemy.

SANTINI (CAPTION)
...because if you don't, then they're definitely going to kill you.

PANEL TWO

Coleman falls on his back, the CAT/WOMAN's teeth at his throat, claws around his shoulders, her back legs scraping at his stomach (ever see a cat with a big chew toy? Something like that). Luckily, his StormWatch suit seems to absorbing most of the damage.

COLEMAN
Get... the Hell...

PANEL THREE

Coleman punches the Cat-Woman in the jaw. She falls to the side.

COLEMAN
Off!

PANEL FOUR

The Cat-Woman is flat on the ground, in front of her face are two combat boots and the barrel of a rifle.

CISCO (O.S.)
Hola, Amiga, where's your smokey little girlfriend? You know, the misty one who stuck her claws in my stomach and tore my guts out?

GRUNIER (CAPTION)
He's not ready for combat yet.

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PANEL ONE

Widescreen, 1/3 page tall. Stormwatch HQ. Santini's Office. Santini sits behind his desk, flipping through a file folder. Opposite him stands Dr. Gunier, arms crossed, looking pissy.

Both wear the relaxed BDU with Blue Beret ensemble.

LETTERING
Friday the 5th. Stormwatch HQ, New York City

SANTINI
I'm not taking him out of the field rotation.

GRUNIER
You have to.

SANTINI
His wounds are healed?

GRUNIER
His PHYSICAL wounds, yes!

SANTINI
What other kind does he have? Spiritual?

PANEL TWO

Grunier sits in front of Santini. She looks concerned.

GRUNIER
Mental.

SANTINI
Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome? I don't buy it. Cisco went through far worse during Project Entry and he bounced back before.

GRUNIER
That was then. This is now. He's got a lot of anger about what happened to him during the attack at the UN.

PANEL THREE

Santini & Grunier.

SANTINI
That terrorist bitch almost killed him. I'd be angry, too.Coleman says Cisco's fit to fight. You give me something solid to put my fingers around or he stays in the field.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRUNIER
You put him in the field, I’m not taking responsibility for his actions.

SANTINI
You won’t have to...

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PANEL ONE

Downshot over Luis Cisco’s shoulder. He has a huge drum-fed Squad Automatic Weapon with a paratrooper stock and a forward-barrel handgrip pointed at the CAT/WOMAN.

SANTINI (CAPTION)
-Cisco’s a professional.

CISCO
Don’t move or I will shoot you. Understand?

COLEMAN (O.S.)
Give it up, Cisco, I don’t think she speaks-

PANEL TWO

Wider shot. From the waist up on Cisco. He fires straight down onto the CAT/WOMAN who is (thankfully) offscreen. Muzzle flashes illuminate him from below. Massive amounts of brass shell casings stream out of his weapon, scattering throughout the panel.

In the BG, Coleman stares at Cisco in shock.

SOUND E/FX
BurrBrakkbraakbrakkbrakkbrakkbrakkk

PANEL THREE

Coleman grabs Cisco’s arm. He’s angry. Cisco is blase, shrugging.

COLEMAN
What the fuck was THAT?

CISCO
She moved.

COLEMAN
“She moved” is NOT an acceptable answer, Specialist!

PANEL FOUR

Cisco loses his cool. He’s in Coleman’s face.

CISCO
Look, Sergeant, this freak just tried to claw your throat out, so don’t you tell me that I wasn’t justified in shooting her ass when she made a move!

PANEL FIVE

Inset panel. Coleman’s look of shock at Cisco being insubordinate.

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PANEL ONE

Stormwatch HQ. Santini and Tefibi sit in front of Tefibi’s computer work station. Live Satellite feed of Grozny on one TV, live-update computer map on another showing little dots and triangles which represent the StormWatch team members’ positions. MTV on a third, CNN on another. Santini has a cup of coffee in front of him, Tefibi is pouring water into a teacup.

Tefibi wears his relaxed BDU with Blue Beret ensemble. Santini is fully suited up in his StormWatch gear.

CAPTION
Tuesday the 9th, Stormwatch HQ, NYC

SANTINI
Can the CIA find out we’re using their satellite?

PANEL TWO

TEFIBI
Hmm? Naah, I didn’t retask it... We’re just tapping their signal as they pass over the area. Why do they have this burnt-out hick town on a routine flyover. anyway?

SANTINI
Last thing CIA wants is to get caught flatfooted if the Russians reinvade Chechnya.

PANEL THREE

Tefibi smiles.

TEFIBI
Why would they want to? It looks like Oklahoma after someone set fire to it.

PANEL FOUR

Santini leans back, takes a pull from his coffee.

SANTINI
Christ, you got six hours for the explanation? Brief history: The Tzars conquered Chechnya a couple hundred years ago. The communists kept it. Stalin deported most of the Chechans in the 40s. They loved the place so much that they moved back after he died.

TEFIBI
Those are some seriously demented people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

Santini smiles.

SANTINI
That's the lesson of the 20th Century, Tefibi: never underestimate the power of Nationalism. Anyway, when the Soviet Union broke up, the Chechans tried to form their own country...

TEFIBI
Hickistan? Dirtnya?

SANTINI
That didn't please the Russians. Problem was, Chechnya's got a lot of oil AND a major Russian oil pipeline. The Russians invaded and got their asses kicked in 1996-

PANEL SIX

Tefibi is flabberghasted.

TEFIBI
Waitasecond... Russia? The mighty Commie Bear that had us all so scared got its ass kicked by these hicks?

SANTINI
Welcome to the Big Secret of the Cold War, Tefibi: it was all bullshit cooked up to sell tanks and jet fighters.

PAGE 12 **12**

PANEL ONE

Tefibi thinks that over.

SANTINI
So anyway, Vladimir Putin, former head of the KGB, runs for President and in the proud tradition of Presidents everywhere, he started a war to rally the electorate behind him.

TEFIBI
Okay, now THAT sounds familiar.

PANEL TWO

Santini points to a color photograph of the Authority standing over the retreating Russian army. (I forget which issue of The Authority that panel was in).

SANTINI
The Russians got their asses kicked AGAIN and finally The Authority forced them out and threatened to radically restructure their skulls if they went back in.

PANEL THREE

Tefibi carves a slice of lemon into his tea.

TEFIBI
And now everything’s great in Chechnya?

SANTINI
Hardly. The place is a mess. The country is torn between the Nationalists and a radical fringe of violent Islamists who want to form an Islamic State in Chechnya, which the Russians will NEVER allow.

PANEL FOUR

Santini scratches his chin. He points to a monitor where satellite footage shows Russian tanks being offloaded from railroad cars.

TEFIBI
So why the Hell are we going there?

SANTINI
The terrorists who attacked the UN are hiding there. They keep attacking neighboring Dagestan, driving the Russians to the point where they go back in and kill everyone in the place. Thus the huge buildup on the border...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FIVE

Santini looks at one of the satellite monitors. Very clear in the middle of it is the dead giant terrorist.

SANTINI
I convinced them to use my plan, instead. Fewer Civilian casualties. But the plan doesn't work unless those superidiots are watching the same channels we are.

PANEL SIX

Tefibi points to the a computer monitor with a schematic of The Authority's Carrier on it. Large sections are glowing red.

TEFIBI
Uh, Colonel? Don't look now, but it looks like they're watching.

SANTINI
Great. You sure this next bit is going to work?

TEFIBI
It had better. If it doesn't...

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PANEL ONE

Widescreen. Exterior: The Authority's Carrier.

SANTINI (CAPTION)
...the entire Stormwatch field team is going to be dead.

PANEL TWO

Interior: Carrier conference room. JACK HAWKSMOOR stands next to - and points at- a hovering mid-air hologram projection of a grainy image of Cisco and Coleman standing over the two dead terrorists, still arguing by the looks of it.

HAWKSMOOR
-killed her in cold blood. I'm beginning to wonder if Santini and his crew aren't seriously looking to eliminate us all!

PANEL THREE

Widescreen. Reverse shot on THE ENGINEER and THE MIDNIGHTER watching the projection image. The Engineer is pissed.

ENGINEER
Don't be so quick with this "us" talk. These terrorists murdered diplomats and firemen at the United Nations. I don't like being lumped in with them.

MIDNIGHTER
He means all post-humans.

ENGINEER
I know what he said and I know what he meant. They aren't the same thing.

PANEL FOUR

Hawksmoor is pissed! The Engineer is pissed also! She's up out of her seat, getting in Hawksmoor's face.

HAWKSMOOR
We told Santini: "Stay out of Chechnya." He didn't listen. We have to show him what happens. If we don't back up our threats, no one will take them seriously!

ENGINEER
These fundamentalist assholes kill women for wearing makeup. The UN wants to kill them, fine. Why are YOU so dead-set against that?.

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PANEL ONE

Hawksmoor and The Engineer have angry body language towards one another. Midnighter stands between them and holds his hands up. Peace Out!

MIDNIGHTER
Arguing between ourselves is not going to get us anywhere... What’s the situation with the Russian tanks on the Dagestan border?

HAWKSMOOR
They’re preparing to attack. I think this UN strike is probably step one towards a full invasion.

ENGINEER
In YOUR opinion! Maybe the Russians are just preparing to defend themselves from these-

PANEL TWO

On MIDNIGHTER. Grim.

MIDNIGHTER
Okay, STOP. We’re getting off-track here... we DO need to respond to StormWatch deliberately ignoring our keep-out order.

MIDNIGHTER
Likewise, as the Engineer says, we need to take care of these Islamic super-terrorists Santini discovered.

MIDNIGHTER
This should be a measured response. The three of us ought to be able to handle this. Door.

PANEL THREE

An Authority “Door” is open in front of the three of them.

MIDNIGHTER
Unless you would rather I call Apollo and The Doctor and leave you two here?

ENGINEER
Not likely.

HAWKSMOOR
I think you’re forgetting who’s supposed to be in charge here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL FOUR

The three Authority members walk through the Door.

MIDNIGHTER
Then act like it. Let’s go to Chechnya.

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PANEL ONE

Exterior. Late Afternoon. Paris. The Eiffel Tower rises up in the panel BG. The three Authority members are in the middle of a French Bistro.

MIDNIGHTER
This doesn’t look like Chechnya.

HAWKSMOOR
Door!

PANEL TWO

Exterior. Morning. Washington D.C. - The Washington Monument is in the BG. Tourists in Hawaiian shirts take photos of the three Authority heavies.

HAWKSMOOR
SOMEONE is severely messing with us.

MIDNIGHTER
Santini. He must have hacked the Carrier’s computers!

ENGINEER
The Carrier is a sentient bio-computer, it’s impossible to “hack” her. Door!

PANEL THREE

Exterior. Morning. Rio de Janiero. The big Statue of Jesus in the BG. A bunch of kids are playing a pickup game of soccer. The Authority is mid-field.

HAWKSMOOR
Well, someone’s done something! Fix it!

ENGINEER
I’m on it. Door!

PANEL FOUR

Stormwatch HQ. Santini and Tefibi smiling big shit-eating grins as they crouch over Tefibi’s equipment.

SANTINI
How long can you keep this up?

TEFIBI
I’m not sure... essentially I’m just tickling the Carrier and she’s too busy “laughing” to stop me from pushing the wrong buttons for the Door...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEFIBI
But, just like with a real woman, she’ll eventually stop laughing and just get mad.

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PANEL ONE

Coleman and Cisco. Coleman’s receiving Santini over his headset.

SANTINI (OVER RADIO)
Bravo Team, Why aren’t you in position? We’re about to enter phase two here, people... You’re about to have some very upset company.

COLEMAN
How much time we got?

SANTINI
About thirty seconds. Find some cover.

PANEL TWO

Pull out to show Coleman and Cisco in the middle of the bombed-out city square. There’s not a single place to hide.

COLEMAN
Where?

SANTINI
I don’t know. You should have thought of that before you two got into a pissing contest. Fifteen seconds.

PANEL THREE

Wider angle on the Town Square. Coleman & Cisco are nowhere to be seen. The Authority’s Door opens up, Midnighter and Engineer are halfway out. In the panel BG are the dead giant SPB and Cat/Woman.

MIDNIGHTER
-and we had BETTER be in Grozny this time...

ENGINEER
Midnighter, you’re starting to sound like a whiney old Queen, you know that?

PANEL FOUR

The Authority Threesome stare at the two bodies. Hawksmoor has his hand to his head as if he has a painful headache.

ENGINEER
There. Dead Super-Terrorist slime. I’d say this MUST be Grozny.

HAWKSMOOR
Ehhhhhhnnn...

PAGE 17 **17**

PANEL ONE

Hawksmoor collapses to the ground, writhing in pain. Midnighter and Engineer crouch around him, trying to figure out what's wrong.

MIDNIGHTER
What the Hell happened?

ENGINEER
I don't know! He's in total agony! Oh... Oh, God, he's directly wired to the city!

PANEL TWO

Pull WAY out to show the fucked-up remnants of the city that was Grozny. For reference, see the satellite map photos of the fucked-up post-Russia Grozny at the end of the script.

ENGINEER (CAPTION)
And we're stuck here!

PANEL THREE

Shot of Pinckney & Golovin, watching the distant Authority guys.

PINCKNEY
Alpha Command, The Authority have arrived. Hawksmoor is down.

SANTINI (ovER RADIO)
Great News, Charlie Team. We'll keep them grounded. I anticipate the arrival of our second set of guests in thirty seconds. It's time to take your shot.

PINCKNEY
Aye sir, out.

PANEL FOUR

Small panel. Angle on the three-man Authority crew. Hawksmoor is in great pain.

A puff of Dirt kicks up next to Hawksmoor's head. It's a 50-cal sniper shot. The Engineer is confused, Midnighter is looking back over his shoulder pointing offscreen to Pinckney & Golovin's position.

MIDNIGHTER
Someone's shooting at us.

ENGINEER
What? Door! Goddammit, Carrier, Door!

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PANEL ONE

Midnighter-vision. Red-Screen, computer readouts tracking the ballistic path back to Pinckney & Golovin. Their heat signatures stand out against the cold stone of the ruined buildings. Midnighter sees his own arm pointing out towards the two StormWatch Operatives.

MIDNIGHTER
There. Two snipers. I’m brain-mailing you a screenshot.

PANEL TWO

The Engineer has converted her right arm into HUGE multi-barrelled guns and is firing at a distant building. Her left arm is launching mortar rounds like a giant grenade launcher.

ENGINEER
Got it. Say goodbye to our two snipers.

PANEL THREE

Pinckney & Golovin’s positions... Two human-shaped outlines are in the firing positions that the StormWatch operatives formerly occupied. Both metal outlines are plugged into big 12-volt batteries and are glowing a dull red-hot.

Huge chunks of the wall are flying everywhere. Both targets have giant holes blown through them.

PANEL FOUR

Half-page wide. On The Engineer. Smiling, pleased with herself.

ENGINEER
Excellent.

PANEL FIVE

Half-page wide. On The Engineer. A shadow covers her from above.

ENGINEER
Oh. Shit.

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PANEL ONE

On Pinckney & Golovin's faces. Their city-ghille suits cover everything about them, completely blocking out their human forms... Making them look like piles of rubble.

PINCKNEY
Alpha Command, Charlie Team is at second location. The Authority believes us terminated. The second patrol team has arrived.

SANTINI (OVER RADIO)
Excellent. How are they handling The Authority?

PANEL TWO

A huge Hulk-like creature dressed in swaddled rags has The Engineer by one foot and is slapping her on the ground like a wet towel. She's looking pretty out of it.

PINCKNEY (CAPTION)
They're handing them quite a leathering, sir. It seems they're pretty upset about The Authority killing their fellow terrorists.

SANTINI (OVER RADIO)
Great. We're allowing in The Doctor and Apollo now. Keep your heads low. Where did Bravo Team end up hiding?

PANEL THREE

Coleman and Cisco crouch inside the dead giant's mouth, looking out through the giant's teeth.

PINCKNEY (CAPTION)
You REALLY don't want to know the answer to that, sir.

PANEL FOUR

On the Midnighter. He stands over the body of the unconscious, fetal-curled Hawksmoor. They are surrounded by a man who has become six men. On their chests, the Duplicates have a Hexagon with a crescent and star within. Other than that, they're wearing crappy Eastern European camouflage and carrying knives, clubs and pistols.

APOLLO (AUTHORITY TELEPATHY CAPTION)
-this is Apollo calling Jack Hawksmoor, The Engineer or The Midnighter. Will one of you please answer? This is-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIDNIGHTER
Nice to finally hear a friendly voice, lover. Our radiotelepathy and door access have been down for the last ten minutes. Hawksmoor and the Engineer could use some backup.

PANEL FIVE

Inset Panel. On Midnighter’s face. Smiling.

APOLLO (AUTHORITY TELEPATHY CAPTION)
What about you?

MIDNIGHTER
Me? I’m fine.

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PANEL ONE

The Midnighter is in midair, completing a frontal leaping kick right into the throat of one of the Hexagonal Duplicates. Two others are falling down dead to the left and right, throwing stars buried three inches into their foreheads.

PANEL TWO

Low to the ground, Midnighter swivels on his hand, sweeping the legs out from underneath two of the other Duplicates.

PANEL THREE

Up on his feet, facing camera, between the two tripped Duplicates. He’s got one in each hand by the neck. He’s snapping their necks. Smiling.

In the foreground, the last (or is that first?) of the Duplicate Men is backing away.

MIDNIGHTER
Don’t run, sweetheart. I’ve got some of this for you, also.

PANEL FOUR

Midnighter is punched in the back by the Hulk-like beast.

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PANEL ONE

Santini & Tefibi watch a video feed from Pinckney & Golovin on the screen. Midnighter has slammed face-first into a cinderblock wall, collapsing it.

SANTINI
Ouch.

SANTINI
Don’t worry, he’s not dead. It’ll take a lot more than that to kill that one. Someday.

PANEL TWO

A red light on Tefibi’s panel is lit up.

SOUND E/FX
BZZZZZZZ.

SANTINI
Front Door buzzer.

SANTINI
Probably the Assistant Russian Ambassador to the U.N. His government asked if he could come by to watch the dog-and-pony show. Go let him in.

PANEL THREE

Santini watches the screen. Behind him, a man in a suit enters the room with Tefibi. He carries a suitcase. (Okay, this is a total gag that NO ONE will get, but since I named the guy Kuryakin and the Russian in “The Man from U.N.C.L.E.” -a show about United Nations spies- was named Ilya Kuryakin, let’s make him look like that guy but a little older).

KURYAKIN
Hello, Colonel Santini. How goes your mission?

SANTINI
Excellently well, Ambassador Kuryakin. The terrorists neutralized the limited force that The Authority sent to deal with us, and are en route to their base with their hostages.

PANEL FOUR

Santini steps aside so the Ambassador can see the readouts.

SANTINI
The Authority’s three reinforcements will arrive in twenty seconds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANTINI
The resulting battle should give our Delta Team plenty of distraction for their strike on the terrorists' leader, Dhul Fiqar.

KURYAKIN
And your assessment of the results of that second battle?

PANEL FIVE

Santini raises his palms up.

SANTINI
These people are powerful, but they're nowhere near as well trained as they'd like to believe. I think Swift, Apollo, and the Doctor will make hash out of them.

PANEL SIX

Santini grins. So does the Ambassador as he reaches inside his coat.

SANTINI
Then again, maybe we'll get lucky and they'll wipe one another out. As long as my team completes their mission, I don't really care.

KURYAKIN
Ah, but my government DOES care, Colonel, which is why there has been a slight change of plans...

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PANEL ONE

Full-page wide, 4/5 page tall. The Russian Ambassador shoots Santini five times square in the chest. Tefibi cowers, afraid.

NO DIALOG

PANEL TWO

Santini lies on the floor, a thin bead of blood coming from his mouth. Eyelids open, pupils dilated, eyes rolled back into his head. HE LOOKS DAMN DEAD!

KURYAKIN (O.S.)
We require that you ALL be dead.

To Be Continued...

REFERENCE FOR THIS ISSUE:

CLAYMORE MINES
http://www.ranger25.com/Claymore.htm

PEOPLE BEING BLOWN TO PIECES IN CHECHNYA
http://poetry.rotten.com/chechnya-operation/

SQUAD AUTOMATIC WEAPON
http://www.army-technology.com/contractors/machine_guns/fnherstal/fnherstal2.html
There's a bigger ammo drum than this available for this weapon... It's round and is the size of a 20" pizza. Let's use that one, not this little wussy square box.

PHOTOS OF RUINED GROZNY
http://www.amina.com/images/grozny.html
Especially: photo 2 - the ruined tree is a great touch
Photo 10 - not all buildings collapse cleanly
Photo 28 - Knocked-down bridge

RUSSIAN GENERAL ERMOLOV
http://www.amina.com/images/ermolov.html

MAP OF CHECHNYAN REGION
http://www.peaceinchechnya.org/maps.htm

SATELLITE MAP OF GROZNY (DJOHAR) BEFORE AND AFTER RUSSIA ATTACKED
http://www.peaceinchechnya.org/photo_djohar.htm

THE UNITED NATIONS:

ONLINE VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE UN:
http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/untour/index.html

HERE'S A 360-DEGREE PANORAMIC QUICKTIME OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL chamber: http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/untour/subsec.htm

CHECHAN POLITICS
http://www.nguworld.com/vindex/96/083096vs.htm